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O 152228Z MAY 98  
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3088  
DIRONDCP WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
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RELEASED IN PART  
B1, 1.5(D)

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/08  
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PINR, PE

SUBJECT: ONDCP DIRECTOR SPEAKS OUT AND MONTESINOS REACTS

REF: LIMA 2930

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY DENNIS C. JETT, AMBASSADOR,  
EMBASSY LIMA. REASON: 1.5 (D).
2. (S) SUMMARY. GOP EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE PUBLIC IMAGE  
OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIN) ADVISOR MONTESINOS  
SECRET

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VIA AN ORCHESTRATED LEAK OF A VIDEOTAPE OF ONDCP DIRECTOR  
MCCAFFREY'S APRIL 10 MEETING WITH GOP COUNTERDRUG OFFICIALS  
BACKFIRED WHEN GENERAL MCCAFFREY DISTANCED HIMSELF FROM  
MONTESINOS IN A WIDELY PUBLICIZED MAY 14 WASHINGTON PRESS  
CONFERENCE. THE ENSUING PUBLIC FLAP HAS GENERATED A LOCAL  
MEDIA FRENZY AS THERE ARE FEW ISSUES THAT GENERATE MORE INK  
LOCALLY THAN THE ROLE OF THE MYSTERIOUS DR. MONTESINOS. IN  
RESPONSE TO MCCAFFREY'S REMARKS, THE SIN HAS TOLD US IT WILL  
CUT OFF GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT INTELLIGENCE AND LAW  
ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION, ALTHOUGH WHAT THIS MEANS AND HOW  
LONG IT WILL LAST REMAINS TO BE SEEN. END SUMMARY.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: DONALD A. JOHNSTON  
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THE FULL MONTY: THE SIN IMAGE MACHINE GOES TOO FAR  
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3. (C) ON A SUNDAY NIGHT NEWS PROGRAM MAY 10 CHANNEL 5 (WHICH IS CLOSELY ALLIED TO THE GOVERNMENT) AIRED A CAREFULLY AND SELECTIVELY EDITED VIDEOTAPE OF THE COUNTERNARCOTICS BRIEFING THE GOP GAVE TO ONDCP DIRECTOR BARRY MCCAFFREY DURING HIS MOST RECENT VISIT TO PERU. THE MEETING WAS RECORDED BY AT LEAST FOUR VIDEOCAMERAS AND THE 12-MINUTE TAPE OF THE EVENT WHICH LASTED OVER AN HOUR HIGHLIGHTED DE FACTO SIN DIRECTOR VLADIMIRO MONTESINOS SPEAKING AT LENGTH ON HIS IDEAS AS TO HOW GOP COUNTERNARCOTICS LEGISLATION COULD BE IMPROVED. HEAD OF THE ARMED FORCES JOINT COMMAND GENERAL NICOLAS DE BARI HERMOZA RIOS AND HEALTH MINISTER COSTA BAUER ALSO SPOKE BRIEFLY ON THE VIDEOTAPE. OTHER GOP OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE DEFENSE AND INTERIOR MINISTERS (WHO ALSO SPOKE IN THE MEETING) AS WELL AS THE SERVICE CHIEFS AND THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE

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POLICE, ARE PICTURED BUT ARE NOT HEARD.

4. (C) THE MONTESINOS VIDEOTAPE WAS RELEASED THE DAY BEFORE THE PERUVIAN CONGRESS PLANNED TO DEBATE AND VOTE ON PRESIDENT FUJIMORI'S REQUEST THAT THE LEGISLATURE CEDE TO THE EXECUTIVE EXTRAORDINARY POWERS FOR 15 DAYS TO ENACT ANTI-CRIME MEASURES (REFTEL). WHILE VOICING GENERAL SUPPORT FOR FIGHTING CRIME, THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION VOCALLY OBJECTED TO THE MEANS OF THE PROPOSAL, PARTICULARLY FUJIMORI'S ANNOUNCED DETERMINATION TO ADD FIGHTING CRIMINAL GANGS TO THE SIN'S LONG LIST OF RESPONSIBILITIES. THE LEAKED MONTESINOS VIDEOTAPE WAS ROUNDLY CRITICIZED IN THE LOCAL INDEPENDENT PRESS AS A CYNICAL EFFORT TO USE THE MCCAFFREY VISIT TO IMPROVE MONTESINOS'S PUBLIC IMAGE AND TO ERODE OPPOSITION TO THE EXPANSION OF THE SIN'S PURVIEW. FUJIMORI'S CONGRESSIONAL MAJORITY DUTIFULLY PUSHED THROUGH THE CONTROVERSIAL POWER-SHIFTING LEGISLATION ON MAY 11, AND FUJIMORI PLEDGED TO RELEASE HIS ANTI-CRIME MEASURES SOON.

5. (U) ALTHOUGH HE EXERCISES CONSIDERABLE POWER AND INFLUENCE IN THE FUJIMORI ADMINISTRATION, MONTESINOS'S PUBLIC APPEARANCES ARE RARE, AND HE HAS NEVER AGREED TO A MEDIA INTERVIEW. IN FACT, THE VIDEOTAPE OF MONTESINOS BRIEFING MCCAFFREY WAS THE FIRST TIME THE GENERAL PERUVIAN PUBLIC HAD A CHANCE TO HEAR THE DE FACTO SIN DIRECTOR SPEAK.

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HIS APPEARANCE AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE TO ATTEND A MEETING BETWEEN FUJIMORI AND MCCAFFREY WHEN THE ONDCP DIRECTOR VISITED PERU IN THE FALL OF 1996 ALSO GENERATED HEADLINES AND WAS INTERPRETED AS AN ENDORSEMENT. THAT MEETING WAS ALSO VIEWED AS AN EFFORT TO UNDERMINE THE CREDIBILITY OF A NARCOTRAFFICKER'S ALLEGATIONS FROM JAIL

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THAT HE PAID THE DE FACTO SIN DIRECTOR PROTECTION MONEY. MONTESINOS ALSO RECENTLY ATTENDED TWO OTHER EVENTS WIDELY COVERED BY THE PRESS -- GENERAL HERMOZA RIOS'S BOOK (ON THE HOSTAGE RESCUE) LAUNCHING IN LATE 1997, AND THE GOP'S APRIL 22, 1998, CEREMONY THAT COMMEMORATED THE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOSTAGE RESCUE.

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MCCAFFREY'S REMARKS SPARK MEDIA FRENZY ...  
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6. (U) ONDCP DIRECTOR MCCAFFREY'S MAY 14 WASHINGTON PRESS CONFERENCE GENERATED FRONT PAGE STORIES, PHOTOS, AND BANNER HEADLINES IN THE LOCAL PRESS. MOST STORIES FOCUSED THEIR HEADLINES ON MCCAFFREY'S COMMENTS THAT HE WAS "OFFENDED BY DR. MONTESINOS'S MANIPULATION AND EXPLOITATION OF MY VISIT TO PERU," AND THAT THE VIDEOTAPE OF THE APRIL 10 COUNTERNARCOTICS BRIEFING GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT MONTESINOS WAS LEADING THE MEETINGS. LOCAL ARTICLES DESCRIBED MCCAFFREY AS "VISIBLY DISPLEASED" AND "EMPHATIC" WHEN MAKING THESE POINTS. THE LOCAL MEDIA ALSO GAVE SPACE

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TO FUJIMORI'S MOST LOYAL SUPPORTERS IN CONGRESS WHO RALLIED  
TO DEFEND THE WORK OF THE DE FACTO SIN DIRECTOR. AMBASSADOR  
JETT SPOKE TO THE PERUVIAN PRESS AT MIDDAY PRIOR TO  
MCCAFFREY'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN A SOMEWHAT FUTILE ATTEMPT TO  
CONTROL ERRONEOUS MEDIA SPECULATION AND REPORTING OF HIS

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REMARKS WAS ALSO CARRIED.

7. (U) DETAILED LOCAL NEWS STORIES ALSO HIGHLIGHTED  
MCCAFFREY'S STATEMENT THAT HE HAD HEARD ABOUT ACCUSATIONS OF  
HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES ASSOCIATED WITH MONTESINOS AND THAT HE  
"SHARES THOSE CONCERNS." MCCAFFREY'S POINT THAT MONTESINOS  
SHOULD MAKE HIMSELF AVAILABLE TO THE PERUVIAN PRESS AND  
HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS TO ANSWER THOSE ALLEGATIONS ALSO MADE  
HEADLINES. AT THE SAME TIME, THE LOCAL MEDIA ALSO CITED  
MCCAFFREY'S STRONG PRAISE FOR PERU'S PROGRESS IN REDUCING  
COCA CULTIVATION, PARTICULARLY PRESIDENT FUJIMORI'S ROLE,  
AND HIS STATEMENT THAT IT WAS NOT HIS PLACE TO RECOMMEND TO  
THE GOP HOW TO ORGANIZE ITS COUNTERNARCOTICS EFFORTS.  
ADDITIONAL STORIES TOUCHED ON RUMORS THAT MCCAFFREY HAD  
PLANNED TO SEND A LETTER OF PROTEST TO THE GOP, BUT THE  
STATE DEPARTMENT CONVINCED HIM TO REFRAIN FROM DOING SO.

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... AND A SIN BACKLASH  
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8. [REDACTED] RECEIVED A TELEPHONE CALL DURING THE  
EVENING OF MAY 14 FROM A SENIOR SIN OFFICER WHO IS A CLOSE  
ADVISOR TO MONTESINOS. NOTING THAT HE WAS DELIVERING A  
MESSAGE FROM MONTESINOS, HE ADVISED [REDACTED] THAT THE GOP

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WAS STANDING DOWN ON ALL GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT INTELLIGENCE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT EXCHANGES. HE EXPLAINED THAT THIS ACTION WAS BEING TAKEN TO PROTEST THE "HARSH AND UNFAIR" CRITICISM LEVIED AGAINST MONTESINOS BY MCCAFFREY. THE SIN OFFICER STATED THAT THE STANDDOWN WOULD REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL THE EMBASSY OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED MONTESINOS'

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CRITICAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIGHT AGAINST NARCOTICS IN PERU. THE OFFICER CONTINUED THAT THE GOP ALSO SOUGHT A RETRACTION OF "ERRONEOUS" STATEMENTS MADE BY MCCAFFREY DURING HIS MAY 14 PRESS CONFERENCE.

9. (S) ASKED IF THE STANDDOWN APPLIED TO OTHER AGENCIES, SUCH AS DEA, THE SIN OFFICER STATED THAT THE EDICT FROM MONTESINOS APPLIED TO ALL USG COUNTERDRUG PROGRAMS, INCLUDING DEA'S. WHEN [REDACTED] ASKED IF THE EMBASSY COULD EXPECT OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF THIS DECISION, THE SIN OFFICER HEDGED A BIT, ULTIMATELY ONLY SAYING THAT THIS WAS BEING WORKED ON. [REDACTED] TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO STATE THAT THE DECISION WAS UNFORTUNATE AND ONLY FURTHER ESCALATED AN ALREADY DIFFICULT SITUATION FOR WHICH THE PERUVIANS ARE TO BLAME. AS OF MIDDAY MAY 15, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE [REDACTED] PROGRAM, IT IS STILL BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR VARIOUS MISSION ELEMENTS ENGAGED IN COUNTERNARCOTICS, INTELLIGENCE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES.

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COMMENT  
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10. (S) MONTESINOS IS A LIGHTING ROD FOR CONTROVERSY IN PERU, AND THE MEDIA AND THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION OFTEN TRY TO CREATE A BILATERAL PROBLEM OUT OF WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY DOMESTIC ISSUE. WHETHER BY ACCIDENT OR DESIGN, THIS TIME IT WAS THE GOP WHICH PULLED THE USG INTO THE PERPETUAL PERUVIAN DEBATE OVER MONTESINOS'S POWER AND ROLE BY ORCHESTRATING THE SCREENING OF THE VIDEOTAPE. MCCAFFREY'S PRESS CONFERENCE LAID DOWN AN IMPORTANT MARKER ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS,

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AND EMBASSY LIMA WILL DEAL WITH THE AFTERMATH STEERING THE GOP AND PERUVIAN PUBLIC ATTENTION BACK ONTO OUR SUCCESSFUL

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PROGRAMS OF BILATERAL COUNTERNARCOTICS COOPERATION. WE  
EXPECT THE MEDIA FRENZY WILL DIE DOWN SOON. THE AMBASSADOR  
WILL AVOID PRESS ENCOUNTERS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO AVOID  
PROLONGING THE STORY. WHILE WE DO NOT TAKE MONTESINOS'S  
ACTIONS TO CUT OFF INTELLIGENCE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT  
COOPERATION LIGHTLY, IT MAY BE SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE WE HAVE A  
CLEAR PICTURE OF HIS TRUE INTENTIONS.

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